

STATE OF SOUTH DAKOTA CLASS SPECIFICATION

Class Title: Public Health Specialist

Class Code: 51042

A. Purpose:

Provides comprehensive public health services in areas such as nutrition, direct care nursing, disease intervention as well as issues regarding education and technical assistance to clients, health care providers and the public on public health, disease transmission, disease prevention, and healthy lifestyles.

B. Distinguishing Feature:

Public Health Specialist meets identified health care needs of individuals and/or populations through ongoing assessment, planning, implementation, and evaluation.

C. Functions:

(These are examples only; any one position may not include all of the listed examples nor do the listed examples include all functions which may be found in positions of this class.)

1. Assesses the health and health care needs of families and individuals who would benefit from health promotion or who are at identified risk of illness, disability, or premature death.
 - a. Develops intervention strategies with the community to meet identified needs that take into account available resources, the range of activities that contribute to health and the prevention of illness, disability, and premature death.
 - b. Evaluates services to determine the extent to which interventions have an impact on the health status of individuals and families.
2. Performs investigations relating to the occurrence, causes, control, and prevention of communicable diseases or illnesses to ensure treatment is received and to prevent the spread of disease or illnesses.
 - a. Provides tuberculosis control and case management services to ensure the detection and treatment of disease and ensures prescribed procedures are followed.
 - b. Provides, reviews, and evaluates immunization levels of day-care centers, headstarts, nursery schools, kindergartens, and transfer students.
 - c. Performs epidemiology to ensure the control and prevention of diseases and continuation of prescribed treatments; and tracks disease morbidity.
3. Develops presentations to assist clients, schools, businesses, health care providers, and community groups understand the causes, control, and prevention of disease and development of healthy lifestyles.
4. Obtains serological and bacteriological specimens, processes for mailing, and interprets laboratory evaluations according to prescribed procedures to ensure proper action is taken.
 - a. Provides counseling services to clients who demonstrate medical needs due to complicated medical conditions or to control medical conditions.
 - b. Develops, monitors, and modifies client care plans to ensure appropriate client services are delivered.
5. Provides family counseling and education to ensure proper methods of caring and accurate information.

- a. Provides education in the areas of infant care, growth and development, safety, nutrition, parenting skills, birth control, and changes in life style.
 - b. Provides technical assistance to health professionals and is available for consultation and case management of public health related situations to ensure accurate information.
 - c. Conducts health assessments and health education programs by providing health appraisals for preschool and school aged children and promotion prevention and wellness.
- 6. Determines eligibility for Department of Health programs based on medical or nutritional needs to ensure needed services are provided.
 - a. Completes accurate, timely, and pertinent documentation on all services provided.
 - b. Conducts home visits by assessing client's health care needs and recommending procedures regarding care.
- 7. Performs other work as assigned.

D. Reporting Relationships:

The Public Health Specialist reports to the Regional Manager. May direct the activities of Licensed Practical Nurses (LPNs).

E. Challenges and Problems:

The incumbent is challenged to assess the health and health care needs of a population and to identify communities and individuals at risk of illness, disability or premature death and develop/implement/evaluate a plan of action to address these needs. The incumbent is also challenged to maintain strict confidentiality for all clients. This is difficult because of the legal obligation to protect the identity of the client while encouraging the cooperation of others in locating, counseling, and treating individuals. Other challenges include ensuring compliance with numerous federal, state, and program regulations, policies and procedures; providing appropriate nursing interventions to clients; securing community resources to meet the varied health needs; establishing rapport with community leaders, teachers, parents, and physicians; and coping with human suffering.

Typical problems resolved by the incumbent include identifying and referring clients to appropriate health care and community resources; uncooperative patients who refuse to follow established medical/nutritional protocol; requests for technical assistance from health care providers faced with unique situations and requesting guidance; public health panic caused by the lack of knowledge or fear of a disease and how it can be transmitted; outbreak control measures to intervene in large numbers of illness and prevent further transmission of infectious disease; client/public not understanding program eligibility guidelines; changing life-style behaviors of clients; and prioritizing all requests for services.

F. Decision-making Authority:

Decisions made by the incumbent include determining compliance with federal and state rules and regulations, program policies and procedures. Determining community needs and recommending services to meet identified needs; taking action to control communicable disease; appropriate testing and treatment; medication compliance and recommending changes in medication management; appropriate testing and treatment to be completed based on assessment of need for HIV/STD; appropriate immunization status of children and adults; appropriate vaccine management by health care facilities; initiation of an investigation and appropriate course of action to take; priority of cases assigned; identifying appropriate health

goals and counseling for clients; determining need to modify client care plans; appropriate documentation and record maintenance for client services; technical information for health care providers; appropriate health care procedures to use based on health assessment; appropriate client referrals to physician or agencies; appropriate client health care plans based on need; and determining program eligibility.

Decisions referred to a superior include media requests for interviews, policy statements, removal of children from school for immunization non-compliance, approval of special projects, unusual circumstances which policies and procedures do not address, legal interpretation, and approval of large expenditures.

G. Contact with Others:

Daily contact with clients to provide health care services, referrals to other health care providers and agencies. Frequent contact with physicians, community leaders, schools, and other agencies to discuss client needs, community needs, and respond to services.

H. Working Conditions:

Located in a clinic or office setting. May be exposed to occupational hazards including infectious diseases; lift and position clients; lift boxes and equipment weighing 50 pounds or more. Occasionally may have to deal with clients with difficult behaviors. Frequent travel within a region.

I. Knowledge, Skills and Abilities:

Knowledge of:

- the theory and practice of health education, community organization, and public relations;
- the cause and control of communicable diseases, measures available for the prevention of premature disability from chronic diseases, cause and prevention of accidents and preventable diseases;
- the principles of the behavioral sciences;
- the professional practices, principles, and dynamics of adult, child, or health education and promotion;
- current social and economic conditions and their relationship to health issues;
- interviewing and investigating techniques;
- human anatomy and physiology;
- physiological impact of disease;
- principles and practices of nursing;
- public health standards and practices;
- community and agency resources.

Ability to:

- establish and maintain effective working relationships with employees of governmental agencies, professional groups, the press, and the public;
- write well and speak fluently and authoritatively on topics of public health before lay and professional groups;
- handle multiple and complex health care programs;
- deal with complicated health conditions;
- deal with difficult clients;
- assess, interpret, plan, and evaluate public health needs;
- understand, interpret, and implement state program regulations and policies.

J. Licenses and Certification:

Must possess a license to practice as a professional registered nurse in South Dakota.